

THE
FATAL EXTRAVAGANCE.

A
TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the
THEATRE-ROYAL
IN
LINCOLNS-INN-FIELDS.

Written by Mr. *JOSEPH MITCHELL.*

The FOURTH EDITION Corrected.

L O N D O N:

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To the most Noble PRINCE,

J A M E S,

Duke HAMILTON,

Duke of BRANDON, &c.

May it please Your Grace,



W H E N I reflect on your Dignity, as First Peer of *Scotland*, the oldest Monarchy of *Europe*, I address You with Dread : And consider my own Ambition of throwing my self, and my first Essay, in Tragedy, under the Protection of Your Illustrious
A 2 Name,

The DEDICATION.

Name, as a Presumption, which no Apology can excuse, unless I seek it, in Your Goodness.

But 'tis both natural and necessary, for Poets, to court the Favour of the Great: And the Honour, which Your Grace's Indulgence vouchsafes me, on this Occasion, distinguishes You no less among the Patrons of the *Muses*, than your high Birth, among the Noble; for, the smaller my Merit may be judged by the World, the more glorious that Humanity, which excites Your Grace, to encourage it, till 'tis increas'd by Your Influence. Many a Slip might have grown to a tall Cedar, if it had been pal'd round, and water'd, instead of being trampled upon. The most invisible Spark may be gradually blown to an illuminating Blaze, and give Delight to its Nourisher.

How bless'd should I conceive my self, might I ever become worthy this Regard of a Patron, the very Dawn of whose Life, is
breaking

The DEDICATION.

breaking out upon the World, with a stronger Lustre, from his Merit, than if receiv'd, from his State.

I snatch'd this Opportunity, to acknowledge my Devotion to Your Grace's Name and Family, and to stand out the first publick Predictor, that Your innate Princely Qualities will render You of more Consequence to your Country, than the splendid Advantages of your Title, and great Power.

So glorious a Conjunction, of happy Circumstances, must be the Blessing of Your Grace's own Life, the Honour and good Fortune of your Friends and Dependants, and the universal Admiration of the Country, that lays Claim to You: A Country, which, I am sure, You will adorn, by your Councils and your Actions, after a Manner, which has never yet been reach'd, even by the Brave and Illustrious, long, Line, of your Predecessors.

May

The DEDICATION.

May the kindest Care of Heaven preserve your important Life from all Dangers, and ill Accidents, to be the Ornament of your own Age, and the great Example, and Emulation, of Posterity!

I am, with the profoundest Duty and Respect,

May it please Your Grace,

Your Grace's most Obedient,

and most Devoted,

Humble Servant,

JOSEPH MITCHELL.

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THE P R E F A C E.

THERE are few Men of Learning, (except some of my own Country, mis-led by a Zeal both indiscreet and unwarrantable) who do not readily acknowledge POETRY to be the Daughter of Religion, and originally design'd to tune Men's Minds to Devotion. This is evident from the many noble Poems, in the *Old Testament*; to say nothing of other Writings. But the primitive Simplicity, becoming gradually lost, as the Art was apply'd to Ends, unworthy its Institution, the Reformers were obliged to take Advantage of Mens Passions, by giving it a new Turn, which, under the Temptation of Delight, disguis'd the Doctrine they recommended. TRAGEDY, in particular, was the Perfection of the *Muse's* Power. 'Till *that* became known, there was wanting a kind of Poetry, which, imitating the Actions of Mankind, might work a readier, and more sensible Effect, by a Correction of the Passions. The Prevalence of Vice, 'tis true, and Men's natural Propensity to resist good Instruction, allow'd not a Success to TRAGEDY, so universal, as it merited. But since no better Help, than *this*, can be devis'd, the Friends, of Virtue and Genius, must use the Means it affords them.

In Countries, where CHRISTIANITY is receiv'd and established, some may, possibly, imagine, there is, now, no longer Need of the Assistance of TRAGEDY: But Experience convinces us, That Many frequent the STAGE, who would hardly

The P R E F A C E.

ly be prevailed upon, to receive Counsel from the PULPIT. The CLERGY, therefore, should consider, as Auxiliaries and Fellow-Labourers, those POETS, who preach Virtue, from the *Press*, or the *Theatre*. And since we seek not a Share of *their* Revenues, for the Pains we take, in their Service, they ought, at least, in Civility, to allow us their Countenance and Acknowledgment! Is there a *Kirkman*, among my Adversaries, whose Zeal is so militant, as to fight without Wages? Why, then, am I condemn'd, who, more generously, go to War, in a Way, they could not take themselves, were they hindred from fighting against Vice from the Pulpit! Who is so rude, as to blame an honest *Voluntier*, in a good Cause? Or, if one deserves, to be a *Commander in Chief*, Why is he grudged Preferment, beyond the List and Rate, of an *Half-Pay-Officer*?

But some, who are moderate, because more wise, than *those* I have had to do with, confess the STAGE capable of being made *useful*, yet condemn it, on Account of the *Abuses* it indulges.— Would they destroy the *Being* of an Art, because its Use is corrupted? They argue, like those Zealous indeed, but *weak* Reformers, who were for demolishing Churches, that they might be sure to leave no Images. According to these Mens way of Reasoning, every Thing, that is not perfect, is dangerous and abominable; for there is nothing so excellent, where Abuses may not enter. *Preaching*, they know well, is often *abused*; will they allow me, therefore, to cry out, That all *Preaching* is *unlawful*?

I writ the following short TRAGEDY, to give my Countrymen, of the Kirk, an Example, that sound and useful Instruction may be drawn from the *Theatre*, and that, only, the Abuse is blameable. I might, indeed, have referred my over-rigid Adversaries to other Pieces of *Dramatic* POETRY, already extant: But some Peculiarities, in my Case, obliged me to give a Specimen, my self, of a Play, wherein, nothing, justly, can be condemned, by the Rules of Religion and Virtue. I am, therefore, not afraid, to be try'd by good Christians; and I hope, to pass uncensured by good Criticks also, notwithstanding the uncommon Manner, in which I have attempted it.

Five Acts, I know, are customary: But they can, by no means, be proved necessary. On the contrary, if any determi-

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The P R E F A C E.

ate Number were to be appointed, as a Standard, *Three Acts* seem better than *Five*, by the Criticks own Rule. A *Beginning*, a *Middle*, and an *End*, say these Gentlemen, are the Stages of the Drama. A first Act, then, would open, and prepare, the Matter intended. A Second would perfect, and heighten it to its Summit; and the Third, in a just, and natural Descent, serve to clear up the Embarrassments, and bring on the Catastrophe. Thus, may *Three Acts* be defended by *Reason*, better than *Five* from *Custom*: But I intend not, hereby, to promote the Introduction of a new Manner.

This *Tragedy* was writ so short, for want of Time to enlarge it, by Addition of other Characters, and Episodical Incidents; yet, because I would not be subject to the Reproaches of mistaken Petulance, I thought it necessary to observe, that if a *Dramatick* Story is compleat, in its *Preparation*, *Progress*, and *Conclusion*, it is of no great Importance, what Number of Acts it consists of.

But one general Error, if I mistake not, among Writers of TRAGEDY, is a Failure in their very *Principle*. They teach not a *Moral*, but describe some Piece of *History*.----- The Business of the STAGE, if I apprehend it rightly, is, first, to intend some general and useful *Instruction*, how Men may avoid certain Mischiefs in Life, by correcting those Passions, which must naturally produce them; and, then, to find, or invent, some *Story*, which may serve as an *Example*, for strengthening that *Precept*, and shew a Man made miserable by Effect of those Passions, which the Writer would teach his Audience to resist, or keep Guard against. Every Thing, in a *Tragedy*, which has not a direct, and visible, Tendency to the Moral it is writ for, is superfluous, and monstrous; and, however pompously embellished, serves for nothing, but to weaken the Instruction, and distract the Attention, and Apprehension, of an Audience.

I took the Hint (and only the Hint, as the Reader may see) of that Story, which I have fitted to the Moral of the following little Piece, from SHAKESPEAR's *Yorkshire Tragedy*, which was put into my Hands, on purpose, by my good Friend, Mr. Hill, to whom I take this Occasion of expressing my Gratitude, in the most publick manner I can; all Endeavours, beside Acknowledgements, being vain, to match the Instances of his

a

Friend-

The P R E F A C E.

Friendship, and that uncommon Humanity, and Frankness of Spirit, so peculiar to himself, in his manner of bestowing Favours: But 'tis needless, to tell the World, how much I am oblig'd to him, and what just Sense I have of his generous Regard to me. They, who know him well, and what a Waste of his important Time he has made for my Interest, will be beforehand with my Acknowledgements, and enumerate the Advantages, which I could not miss from his Friendship. ----- I owe much, in the Scheme, in the Sentiments, and Language, of this Piece, to the Direction of that accomplished Gentleman, who has either no Enemies, or they are such, because Strangers to his good Qualities; for 'tis only necessary to *know* him, to be, by Choice, or Obligation, made inviolably his own. ----- I embrace this Opportunity of thanking him for his excellent Prologue, which so well prepared the Audience for the Representation. Nor can I help thanking him even for the Epilogue, tho' not less pleasant on my self, than on my Adversaries among the *Scots* Clergy; for who would not be contented under a Stroke, or two, of his Satyr, whose *Praise* (as *Juba* says of *Cato*) I would rather have, than Worlds for my Admirers?

Before I end this Preface, I must not forget to thank the Generosity of my Friends, of all Qualities, who, so nobly, grac'd the Action of my first Endeavour, in TRAGEDY. I should have very little Merit, not to improve on such Encouragement. -- Before so select, and illustrious an Audience, the admirable *Mrs. Seymour*, and the Gentlemen, who so well performed the Parts, must have felt a Satisfaction, equal to that Applause, which their Action deserved, and met with.



P R O-



P R O L O G U E.

Written by A A R O N H I L L, Esq;

Spoken by Mr. R Y A N.

*W*Arm'd, by a Kindred Sense of England's Woes,
A Caledonian Muse, with Pity, glows;
From ruin'd Hopes, a saving Moral takes,
And paints th' Unhappy, for the Happy's Sakes.
Scotland's new Taste our meaning Scene supplies,
And a first Flight, on Tragick Pinions, tries.
Brave, and long fam'd in Arms, her warlike Race
Have trod the Fields of Death, with dauntless Grace!
Fierce, and untir'd, in Blood, have, nobly, dar'd,
And every Toil, and every Danger, shar'd.
Now, fir'd by rising Arts, she grasps the Bays,
And her old Cant, like falling Stocks, decays.
Her long-lost Muse new-lights her ancient Flame!
And our Scene blazes, with recover'd Fame.

*We teach, To-night,--- ah! won'd'twere not too late,
How, rash, believing Avarice galls a State;
What private Sorrows, from wild Hazards, flow,
And how false Hope produces certain Woe.*

*This,--- the most natural Business of the Stage,
Will all your generous Hearts, 'tis hop'd, engage:
None can their Pity, for those Woes, conceal,
Which most, who hear, perhaps, too deeply, feel.
The Rants of ruin'd Kings, of mighty Name,
For pompous Misery, small Compassion claim.
Empires o'erturn'd, and Heroes, held in Chains,
Alarm the Mind, but give the Heart no Pains.*

PROLOGUE.

*To Ills, remote from our Domestick Fears,
We lend our Wonder, but with-hold our Tears.*

*Not so, when, from such Passions, as our own,
Some Favourite Folly's dreadful Fate is shown;
There the Soul bleeds, for what it feels within;
And conscious Pity shakes, at suffering Sin.*

*O! give Attention, to the moving Scene,
And shun what yet may be, by what has been,*



E P I.

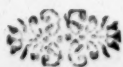


A P R O L O G U E,

Written upon the Revival, in *February*, 1729.

*'T WAS in that fatal Year (whose very Name
Awakes each suffering, generous, BRITON'S Shame)
When Stocks, like SYRENS, charm'd all Ranks to buy,
That their Directors might, of Course, destroy;
When Vice seem'd Virtue, and Mankind seem'd mad,
'Till Thought took Warning from Experience sad,
And, bent beneath the Burden of their Fate,
People grew wise, and penitent, too late ———
'Twas then, from common Woe, and Story true,
Our pitying Poet first the Picture drew,
Which, then presented, was approv'd by You.
—— Long has it lain unseen, to some unknown;
(For loth were We your Misery shon'd be blown.)
But, now the Storm is past, and, by the Skill
Of Pilot-Statesmen, you're a Nation still;
Safe on the Shore, survey the vast Profound,
Reflect with Pleasure, and preserve your Ground.
Since publick Hazards can no more enthrall,
And none, but Sharpers, study Rise and Fall,
Let not, O let not private Gaming snare;
The Sons make fruitless all their Father's Care,
And, for their Race, entail'd Distress prepare.
To-night, from dire Example, learn the Fate,
Which Gaming brings a Family or State,
What general Risques from heedless Hazards flow;
And how false Hope produces certain Woe.
If moving, moral Scenes deserve your Care,
With one Hour's Silence crown our Poet's Pray'r.
He aims not to amuse and cheat the Mind,
But be of useful Service to Mankind.*

1.



T H E

THE
EPILOGUE.

Written by AARON HILL, Esq;

Spoke by Mrs. SEYMOUR.

*YOU've seen the Play:--- and I'll unfold the Poet,
To whom,--- (stray'd Sheep, of a Pure Flock!) we owe it.
He's a Chance-Blessing--- somewhat strangely flung us!
Dropt--- from the Clouds of Innocence,--- among us!
Slipt, thro' the Kirk's loose Pale, We gave him Quarter---
Poor Soul!--- He' had like to have been the Muse's Martyr.
When Stage-Plays!--- and Abominations!--- took him,
Grace, and the Shepherds of the Saints, forsook him.
'Twas given, thenceforth, to Satan's Power, to win him:
--- The Root of the Sound Matter--- was not in him!
Yet, tho' rebuk'd, full sore,--- he's no huge Sinner:
You'll scarce see One of his pure Brethren--- thinner.
Most sanctify'd of Face! Troth--- I'm afraid,
If his Looks lie not--- the poor Man's a Maid!*

*The Bard, not carnal-minded,--- say the Curious,
How come th' unfleshy Folks, to be so furious?
Judge you the Quarrel, right,--- we'll, briefly, show it.---
---Good Plays give good Instruction--- (said the Poet.
Vanity! cry'd the Brethren,--- Gross Defilement!
And, so, the War broke out, past Reconcilement.*

*Young Bays, provok'd, here, drew his wrathful Pen---
Shine forth, said he, my Muse, on those dark Men;
And prove, by dint of fair Example, whether
Much Goodness is not learnt, by coming hither?*

But,

EPILOGUE.

*But, what He teaches, be to Him alone,---
I'll teach a Secret Lesson, of my own.
--- Say they, of Plays,--- that Men learn Nothing by 'em?
I stand--- the Stage's Champion--- and defy 'em.
Who, that has seen, To-night, how I, a Wife,
Gave Counsel, fit to've sav'd my Spouse's Life,
Learns not this Moral, past all Contradiction,
That Disobedient Husbands--- meet Affliction?
That He's most happy, who, his Fetters eases,
And lets his wiser Wife--- do--- what she pleases?*

*This, for our Sexe's Fame, his Play produces---
You see--- all Doctrines have their hidden Uses.
To This--- if the bluff Brethren preach Resistance,
Let 'em, if they love Safety, keep their Distance.
For, should we catch 'em, in our wrong'd Dominion,
Stiff as they are, we'll make 'em change Opinion.*



D R A-

Dramatis Personæ.

Bellmour,

Mr. *Quin.*

Courtney,

Mr. *Bobeme.*

Bargrave,

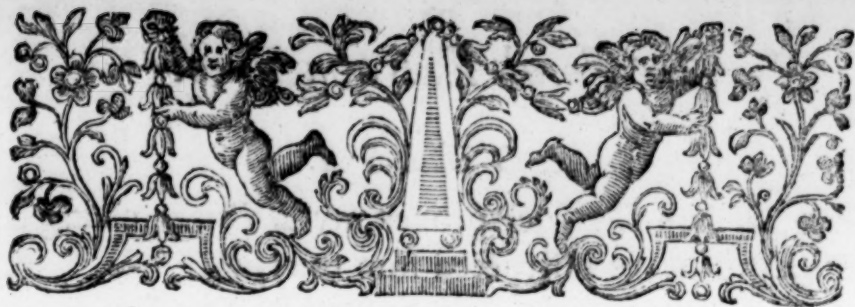
Mr. *Ogden.*

Louisa,

Mrs. *Younger.*



T H E



T H E
Fatal EXTRAVAGANCE.

SCENE *Bellmour's House.*

Enter LOUISA and COURTNEY.

LOUISA.

T WAS kind! this Speed of your Return.—
But, tell me,
What Success had you? Was my Father
mov'd?

Methinks, I read your News, in your sad Visage,
And my Heart trembles with prophetick Fears.

COURTNEY.

'Tis as I judg'd 'twou'd be—His own Wants press
him;

He sinks beneath your Husband's wastful Life,
Those boundless Dicings, and voluptuous Riots,
And this last, worst, Adventure, of lost Hope,
Which has, at once, dissolv'd a Wealth so vast!
That Pity scarce vouchsafes to feel his Sufferings!

B

LOUISA.

The Fatal Extravagance.

L O U I S A.

But his late Conduct proves my *Bellmour* chang'd:
Misfortunes have instructed him to *think*,
And *thought* has captiv'd every madding passion.

C O U R T N E Y.

Yet early Vice, by Custom, long indulg'd,
Leaves such Impression of habitual Ill,
As finds no Cure, but from severe Remorse,
And Time's slow working.

L O U I S A.

Nay, name not *Bellmour's* Vice——
He has no Vice——His very Power is lost,
Even had he taste for Follies——Poor and despis'd,
The Slaves, for whose curs'd Sakes he stands reproach'd,
Now shun his Converse. Villains, who betray'd him,
Start, when they meet him. Poverty, like his,
Spreads a Contagion round it. All Mankind
Cry “Lord have Mercy! and fly, frighted from him.
Did you lay open our incumbent Ruin?
Urg'd you my Father strongly? Want's cold Hand
Creeps o'er us, and 'tis now no Time for Counsel.

C O U R T N E Y.

I told him all, and mov'd his utmost Pity.
Still as he set, to view, your Husband's Failings,
I urg'd his Virtues, and bore down the Ballance;
I prais'd his Wit, his Courage, his Humanity,
His fine frank Spirit, and his generous Nature:
But 'twas lost Hope——Believe, his Brother knows him;
What he has done, already, weighs him down,
His struggling Will, to save you, has undone him,
And *Bellmour's* self wou'd there beg Aid, in vain.

L O U I S A.

The Fatal Extravagance.

3

LOUISA.

O! he was never born to be a Beggar!
Heaven is too kind to Goodness, to forsake him!
He, whom soft Pity melts at other's Misery,
Deserves, himself, to live exempt from Woe.
Bellmour could ne'er behold a Stranger wretched,
But he partook his Pain, 'till he cou'd ease it.
How, then, will he support the weeping Anguish,
Of three poor Children, all undone by *Him*?

COURTNEY.

His Good, and Ill, so chequer out his Nature,
That *which* excells, is doubtful. Nobly *will'd*,
His pitying Heart flows out, in generous Purposes:
But, wanting Power, to stem the Tide of Pleasure,
Irresolute, he drives, and floats to Ruin.
Men must be rigid, and severe, in Virtue!
Serious, and noble Aims distinguish Reason!
To live for Taste is not to live at all.
The Man of Pleasure dreams away his Days,
And dies, to be forgotten——*Bellmour's Soul*,
Had Contemplation bent it to a Byas,
Had given a *Point* to Fame's proud Pinnacle,
And purpled o'er his Name with deathless Glory!
Now, it lies lost in Dust!——I wou'd 'twere mine,
To screen you from the Storm, that's gathering round
you:
But I, unblest'd with Power, can only *wish*,
And wonder, why the Strong have feeble Wills.

LOUISA.

Oh! I shall tremble to behold his Face!
His ruin'd Family hangs on his Heart,
His helpless Children's future Fate distracts him,

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And

And the once lively *Bellmour* smiles no more.
 Silent, he walks, or stands with folded Arms,
 And still looks down, as if his Soul were Earth.
 If e'er, by chance, his lifted Eyes meet mine,
 The starting Tears glare dreadfully upon me,
 And, quivering, struggle, to flow loose, in Sorrow.
 Then Sighs, suppress'd by force, strive hard for Vent,
 And heave, and swell, like Earthquakes, in his Bosom.
 Groaning, at length, he breaks, in Whirlwind, from me,
 Torn by ten thousand Pangs, raves, reddens, starts,
 And frights me with a dreadful Burst of Passions!

O Uncle! what remains for Hope to snatch at?
 Of all the wide Estate, that late enclos'd us,
 But this poor House is left us—— This *too* totters.
 Soon *Ruin*, with his *palsied* Hand, will seize
 This antient Pile, and shake it into Dust!
 Not thrice the Worth of all, that now is ours,
 Will save poor *Woodly* from that fatal Bond,
 He sign'd, to serve my *Bellmour*. All our Hope
 Was in your friendly Journey to my Father.
Woodly must sink, and *Bellmour* cannot bear it.
Bellmour will never live, to sink a Friend!
 Look yonder, where, in pensive Grief, he walks,
 Unhoping, and disconsolate!

C O U R T N E Y.

Poor *Bellmour*!
 How chang'd, from that wild, noisy, joyful Rioter,
 Which all his Friends have known him! Still extream!

Enter BELLMOUR, *walking Melancholly.*

L O U I S A.

My Life! my *Bellmour*! wound not thus my Soul,
 I have more Woes to bear, that are my own,

Than

The Fatal Extravagance.

Than my Strength matches—add not thou thy Sorrow;
That would o'erwhelm me quite.

B E L L M O U R.

I pray forgive me.
Prison'd in Thought, I could not look about me,
And my Soul miss'd thy Comfort.— I was musing.

L O U I S A.

What sad Reflection held you?

B E L L M O U R.

A mournful Wandering!
No Matter now——

L O U I S A.

Nay you must tell it me.

B E L L M O U R.

I was considering which of my three Boys,
Some few Years hence, when I'm dissolv'd in Death,
Will act the Beggar best! run, bare-foot, fastest!
And, with most dextrous Shrugg, play Tricks for Cha-
rity!

L O U I S A.

O! for Heav'n's Sake, forbear, by Starts! like This,
To image Horrors, Nature shrinks at Thought of.

B E L L M O U R.

Why, my *Louisa*! 'tis a Wretch's Duty,
To learn to bear his Misery—— to know it,
To use our selves to *poize* it, is the means
To make it easy to us.—— Yet I'm to blame!
Thou had'st no Share, in any Guilt of mine;
I ought *alone* to suffer.—— 'Twas too cruel,
'Twas even unmanly, to afflict thy Innocence!

C O U R T.

C O U R T N E Y.

Oh! Sir, 'tho' the Grief you should resist!
 As the gross Atmosphere is shook by Tempests,
 Which never ruffle the superior Regions;
Mean Spirits, only, buckle under Woe;
 It is the great Man's Pride, to *combat* Fortune,
 And rise against Oppression.

B E L L M O U R.

Sir, 'tis true——
 And, I remember, you have oft advis'd it,
 While I had Power, to try my Virtue's Proof.
 A Man may *dye*, unhelp'd——but must not hope
 To *Conquer*, without Arms.——Talking of Help,
 Will your good Brother lend it?—Speaking Silence!
 How could I hope it from him?

C O U R T N E Y.

Yet despair not——
 A Time may come, when even your Woes shall prove
 Great Benefits. Firm Spirits break Misfortunes!
 To suffer well 's the noblest way to Conquest.
 On a smooth Sea, the Sailor shows no Skill,
 But he displays it *all*, in Hurricanes.

B E L L M O U R.

He wou'd not, sure, neglect to save his Daughter,
 Had he the Power still left him— Yet Friends, some-
 times,
 Are more than Fathers! A Father *cannot* be
 More than a Friend!——I had a Friend in *Woodly*!
 Once he was happy——what he shall be *hereafter*,
 He owes to friendless *Bellmour*! Perish the Name;
 To what a stinging Death is he reserv'd,

Who

The Fatal Extravagance.

7

Who leaves a good Man wretched, whom he *made* so?
Sir, it wou'd ease me of a galling Pain,
Wou'd you dissolve this disappointed Hope
In *Woodly's* Breast.— 'Twere Sin to nourish it,
Since 'tis unstable— He must know it soon:
Let it be told by any Tongue, but *Bellmour's*.

C O U R T N E Y.

I'll visit him this Instant.— Do you, mean while,
Bravely seek Comfort from a firm Belief,
That Heaven befriends your Virtues, and will save
you.

A Hand unseen these Clouds of Woe may 'clear,
And, into Triumph turn distracting Fear.

[*Exit Courtney*;

B E L L M O U R.

Louisa! I am Damn'd, while yet alive!

L O U I S A.

Alas! what mean you to distract me thus
With your wild Startings?

B E L L M O U R.

Nay, but mark me well,——
Want's the Damnation of a living Sinner——
What have I liv'd for, if I die a Beggar?
Why were my Ancestors renown'd in *War*?
Why, with grave Judges, have they grac'd the Bench,
Or, with wise Votes, the Senate?— In *Me*, must beg—
Mark that lean Word, *Louisa!*— In *Me* must beg
That ebbing Name, which, through a length of Ages,
Has given a Kingdom Honour. Bear'st thou *That*?
How excellent art Thou! not to have scorn'd me!
Good Heaven! that Reason should give Madness way,
'Till

'Till Man finds Musick, in a ratling Dice-box!
 And has contracted thrice three thousand Acres,
 To the curs'd Compass of a narrow Table!
 With what a thoughtless Rapture have I shook 'em!
 Hung o'er the Throw! and hurl'd out my Posterity
 Pimps, Thieves, or Beggars!— But then at last,
 This Madman's Hazard! of my treasur'd Remnant,
 In the wild Lottery of a publick Hope,
 Where Reason had no Chance, and Villains govern'd,
 Curs'd! groundless, Rashness!— Tear me Limb from
 Limb,

Some pitying Torturer! To die at once,
 Were Comfort even in Agony!— But I shall be,
 Whole Ages, *after* Death, in dying — Villains,
 Dull, pitiless, insulting, dirty Villains,
 Will point at some poor ragged Child of mine,
 And say, ' There's Pride and Name! There's *Bell-*
mour's Honour!

' There's the blest Remnant of a boasted Family!
 Curse the keen Thought! It pours all Hell upon me!

L O U I S A.

Still wilt thou, thus, snatch at Despair's wild Shadows?

I thought, the manly Soul cou'd Smile at Anguish;
 Woman's weak Mind may bend beneath Adversity;
 But *Bellmour's* Brow, methinks, shou'd wear a Majesty,
 And make Affliction awful.

B E L L M O U R.

Away with Counsel.

I cannot hear Thee! Thy moving Air! thy Wisdom!
 That Lovely Softness, which *bewitches* round Thee!
 Each Charm, which has a thousand times appear'd me!

Now

The Fatal Extravagance.

9

Now makes me mad ! Like Oyl, pour'd out on Flame,
I tower, in Blaze, and burn with tenfold Fierceness.
Thy ev'ry Word is Death ! Each Look thou giv'st me
Breaks thro' my Eye, comes rushing on my Soul,
And shoots sharp Arrows, thro' my bleeding Conscience.

Thinkst thou, I am so mean, so lost a Wretch,
That my *own* Misery stings me ? Cruel Woman !
What *earthly* Ills can *Bellmour* stoop to fear,
Which hurt *but Bellmour* ? 'Tis true, indeed, *thy* Fate
I have not learn'd to bear — *There*, Grief unmans me ;
Thine and thy helpless Infants Woes rise to me,
Glare on my Apprehension, like pale Ghosts !
And point me into Madness ! — Oh ! I've wrong'd
Thee !

L O U I S A.

'Tis wronging me to say it —

Re-enter COURTNEY.

B E L L M O U R.

Courtney return'd so soon !

I like not this —

L O U I S A.

Why look you pale, good Uncle ?

C O U R T N E Y.

To bring unwelcome Tidings, to the Wretched,
Gives the sad Teller half the Hearer's Woe.

B E L L M O U R.

Friendly Preparative ! What follows next
Can be but *Woodly's* Ruin !

C

COURT-

The Fatal Extravagance.

C O U R T N E Y.

He's undone!——

L O U I S A.

Unhappy *Bellmour*!

C O U R T N E Y.

Near your House I met him,
 Hemm'd by a swarthy Guard of licens'd Villains,
 The Law's grim Blood-hounds. With rapacious Talons,
 They dragg'd him on, in merciless Serenity,
 To shut him from his Hopes, in joyless Prison!]

B E L L M O U R.

Oh!

C O U R T N E Y.

At short distance, near the Sycamore,
 That marks the Turning to that now-fall'n House
 Of this poor Gentleman, I saw his Lady,
 Wild, with a Storm of Grief! Her Hair dishevel'd!
 And her loose Robes, blown, careless, by the Wind!
 Struggling, with weeping Servants, to break free.
 Fain wou'd she follow him, to share Restraint:
 But, by superior Force, held back, and hindered,
 With straining Eyes, she kept him long in view;
 And, when a gushing Flood obscur'd her Sight,
 Still more to lengthen out a last, sad, Look,
 She wip'd away the Tears, and gaz'd, again!

L O U I S A.

Dreadful Description!-- Close it here, good Uncle!
 It cuts too deep, and wounds my *Bellmour's* Soul.

C O U R T-

The Fatal Extravagance.

11

C O U R T N E Y.

No more remains to tell, but, that his House
Is fill'd with Ruffians, his rich Goods torn down,
And his griev'd Wife, and Children, roam, unshelter'd,
Without a Home, to succour them.

L O U I S A.

O guide them hither.

Let me, with open Arms, fly to receive them,
And strive, if possible, to give them Comfort.

B E L L M O U R.

Louisa!—As thou wouldst preserve my Life,
Bring not their Grief too near me.-- My melting Soul
Flows into Air, as I but *hear* their Misery:
To *see* it, wou'd distract me.— *Said* he nothing?

C O U R T N E Y.

Marking me, as I turn'd my Face aside,
He call'd, and counsell'd you to save yourself,
By sudden Flight:—Since other Ruffians, brought
By *Bargrave*, your malicious Creditor,
Will presently be here, on the same Purpose.
As for *my* Fate, said he, bid him not mourn it:
To fall for *Bellmour*, wou'd have given me Joy,
Had *Bellmour's* self not fall'n.

B E L L M O U R.

He falls, indeed!

C O U R T N E Y.

Now, as I enter'd, *Bargrave*, just arriv'd,
With his infernal Crew, besets your Gates.
A barbarous Triumph glows on his proud Cheek,

C 2

And

And from beneath his Brows o'erjutting *Low'r*,
Malicious Insults grin, in hollow Ambush!

L O U I S A.

Now, *Bellmour*! thou art lost! — immediate Ruin
Will swallow *Thee* and *Me*, and our dear *Children*!
All! All! must sink together. — Teach us, good Uncle!
Which Way to fly — what Measures to pursue.

C O U R T N E Y.

The Doors, fast barr'd, are guarded by your Servants;
And you may thro' the Grove escape, unseen.

B E L L M O U R.

No — let him enter. — This *Bargrave* taught me
Vice,

And counsell'd even the Adventure, that undoes me!
He wrongs the Devil, who makes himself the Punisher
Of Ills, which he excited! Justice acts wisely!
Oh! She's *not* blind. — She chuses a fit Moment,
And throws him on my Vengeance. Let him enter.
Bring he as many Lives, as he has Crimes,
May Curses catch me, if he scape my Hand!

L O U I S A.

As thou lov'st me, *Bellmour*! be not rash.
Should'st thou add Murder to our other Woes,
How wretched shou'd we be? —

C O U R T N E Y.

Persuade him rather,
Sooth him to Pity. Wou'd he free your Friend,
And add some Weeks of Liberty, for Tryal,
What Succour may be found; you've many Friends:
Who knows what unhop'd Aid may rise to save you?

B E L L-

The Fatal Extravagance.

13

B E L L M O U R.

No, *Courtney*! Friendship rises but with Fortune;
And sets when Men go downward. Yet, I thank you.
Rage had obscured my Reason. — Say, to *Bargrave*,
I have an Offer for his private Ear. —

I will instruct my swelling Indignation,
To cool, and settle, like a Courtier's Passions.
What cannot Interest teach us? [Exit *Courtney*.

Leave me, *Louisa*!

I wou'd not have thee blast thy innocent Eyes,
With sight of such a Monster. — Nor brook I, well,
That thou, who hast been taught to love Sincerity,
Shou'dst hear me flatter Infamy!

L O U I S A.

Do but think
'Tis for their Sakes, whom most you wish to Succour,
And you will find it easy. Farewell! he comes.

[Exit *Louisa*.

Enter B A R G R A V E.

B A R G R A V E.

So Sir! I find, you make your House your Garrison!
Bold fourfac'd Centinels admit, with Caution,
Whom you vouchsafe your Pass to. — 'Tis great,
indeed!

Girt, Sovereign-like, within your Palace Walls,
The Law must beg Admission! But the Pride,
With which your State o'erlook'd me, will instruct me,
'Till I find means to reach you. —

B E L L M O U R.

I sent not for you

Thus

Thus to revive old Hatred. 'Twas my Meaning,
To set before your Eyes the spreading Misery,
From which a Week's short Respite may, perhaps,
Free *Woodly*, and my self, nor do you wrong.

B A R G R A V E.

Oh, Sir ! no doubt, 'tis likely, that Seven Days
Will pay a Bond, which twice Seven Months, and more,
Has drawn no Interest from you ! — *Woodly* may claim
Some little Pity. — He's a suffering Tool,
Who Faſts to feed your Riots. But for you,
No Plea bears Influence. What a maſs of Wealth
Loaded your Youth ! The Toil of careful Anceſtors !
And, how it is conſum'd, let Thouſands tell,
Whoſe liſted Eyes and Hands proclaim their Wonder.
I dare not whiſper it. — Men wou'd think me Mad :
And laugh to hear, that the once liberal *Bellmour*
Is grown a Niggard, now ; and like a Miſer,
Whines for a Day of Grace. — And ſwears 'twill
ruin him,
To pay his Creditors. — Name it no more. —
Should it get wind, 'twou'd lower your tow'ring Top-
fails,
And loſe you many a Cap, and Country Shout,
As you ride thro' the Villages.

B E L L M O U R.

Insulting Wretch !
It grates my inmoſt Soul, to ſuffer this,
But my Friend's Fate depends on't. — You ſeem'd
to ſpeak,
As if you pity'd *Woodly*. — Give him Liberty :
And let me fill the Place, to which you've ſent him ;
I aſk no more. — For my own Miſeries,
Perhaps

The Fatal Extravagance.

15

Perhaps, they merit not ——— I'm sure they *scorn*,
What Pity thou can'st give them. ———

B A R G R A V E.

Oft, I remember,
Woodly, with Zeal for holy Texts, transported,
Wou'd preach, and cite Divinity. — Dull! Dull!
How cou'd he miss that Caution, which forbad him
To be another's Surety? What comes after,
He now, perhaps, has learnt. — And will remember
When, next, he talks, to edify.

B E L L M O U R.

Nay, then,
Off, mean Hypocrisy! I'll make thee hear me,
In Words, which match thy Malice. Think, low
Traytor!
How I, first, learn'd that Guilt, with which, but now,
Thy Tongue reproach'd me! Who, but the Villain
Bargrave?

B A R G R A V E.

Ha! Villain! said you? [Offering to draw,

B E L L M O U R.

Yes, the Villain *Bargrave*. ———
Touch not thy Sword. ——— Should'st thou unsheath
it, here,
Thy Guardian Devil, too weak to save his Minister,
Should rise, in vain, betwixt us!

B A R G R A V E.

I'll hear thee out. ———

B E L L-

Who, but thy self, spread all those Snares about me,
 Which, first, entangling, next o'erthrew my Virtue?
 Who stain'd the Native Whiteness of my Soul,
 And spotted it with Follies? Think, how this Bond,
 Was fraudulently, and, by shameful Arts!
 Won from my clouded Reason! when the Fumes,
 Of madding Wine, had warm'd my yielding Fancy,
 Fit for a Knave's Impression! — Hast thou Humanity?
 And dost not feel a Ruin thou hast caus'd?
 Hast thou Reflection? and canst thou sleep, unstung,
 By guilty Startings, and remorseful Dreams?
 Or have the Fiends, that haunt thy gloomy Bosom,
 Unhumaniz'd thy Heart? fear'd up thy Conscience?
 And left all Devil within thee? —

B A R G R A V E.

Now take Breath:
 And hear me tell the Effect of this fine Pleading.
 I find my self, with all these black Endowments,
 Your Master, and your Scourge.-- But that I scorn thee,
 I could be angry. — Mark this silent Witness:
 Look on this Bond. — And curse the woeful Hour,
 That gave thy Friend, and thee, to my Disposal.
 I'll leave our Wives, to *scold* the Quarrel out,
 While I seek Vengeance, not from Words but Action.
 [He attempts to go out.]

B E L L M O U R.

By Action! didst thou say? I thank thee, *Bargrave*.
 Thou hast instructed Me. — That fatal Bond
 Shall never rise, in Judgment, against *Woodly*.

[Drawing his Sword, and putting
 himself before the Door.]

Just

Just Heav'n, that hates Oppression, points a Way,
To ease my Wretchedness of half its Load,
By cutting thro' that Chain, that binds my Friend.
Now if thou dar'st defend thy Villanies,
Unsheath thy Sword, and to this guarded Door
Force thy wish'd Passage, thro' the Breast of *Bellmour*.
[*They fight, and Bargrave falls.*]

B A R G R A V E.

Curfes consume that all-destroying Hand!
'Spite of my wish'd Revenge, thou wilt escape me:
No Heir survives, to put the Bond in Proof,
And *Woodly*, and thy self, are free again. [He dies:]

Enter COURTNEY, surpriz'd: And LOUISA,
at another Door.

C O U R T N E Y.

What have you done? I fear'd this rash Effect
Of Rage, but half suppress'd: And waited near.
But an Attempt, yon Blood-hounds made without,
To force an Entrance, call'd me off too fatally!

L O U I S A.

Was this, my *Bellmour*! speak, was this the Way,
To ease our Wretchedness? Oh! this black Chance
Sinks us still deeper, Cuts us off from Comfort,
And we can never, now, be happy more!

B E L L M O U R.

Courtney! 'twere vain to wish this Act undone.
Scarce can it claim Repentance. — Secret and sudden,
Let me entreat thee to convey this Parchment
[*Taking the Bond from Bargrave's Pocket.*
D Into

Into my *Woodly's* Hand. — Say how it happen'd :
Tell him, whatever Fate may do with *me*,
I'm blest'd to give him Freedom.

C O U R T N E Y.

Guard the Doors well. — There's Danger near :
And I'll not leave you long. [Exit Courtney.

L O U I S A.

Fly ; for Heaven's sake, begone.
One Hour's Delay prevents Escape for ever.

B E L L M O U R.

What wou'dst thou have me do ?

L O U I S A.

Let me disguise thee. —
Then thro' the Grove, haste ; and, in some poor Cottage,
Entreat a short Concealment. -- There I'll find thee,
And we'll consult Relief from all our Woes.

B E L L M O U R.

Fix'd as my Fate, I stand, unmov'd, to expect it.
I'll stir not hence, by Heav'n.

L O U I S A.

Oh ! do not Swear !
Think, how my Peace of Mind, my Hope, my Misery,
Depends on Thine. — Thus on my Knees, I urge it.
Thou, being free, may'st find a thousand Ways
To succour us ; but if *thou* fall'st, a Family,
A Lost ! a Friendless Family ! falls *with* thee.
Oh ! if I ever was beloved by *Bellmour*,
If all my Pray'rs, my Vows, my Tears, can move him,
Let him but grant me this. — Let him but *leave* me,
Rain

The fatal Extravagance.

19

Gain *then* a *World* of Woes upon my Head!
Let Want, Reproach, Contempt, and all Life's Agonies
In ceaseless Bitterness of Soul, afflict me.
While *thou* art safe, if I but let one *Sigh*,
One *Breath* of Discontent escape my Lips,
Curse me *thy self*, and make me lost, indeed.

B E L L M O U R.

Excellent Woman! — rise. — To see thee *thus*
Is Torture beyond bearing!

L O U I S A.

I will not leave thee. —
Here, at thy Feet, thus humbled, as that Dust,
Which I shall shortly be, when I have lost thee,
Here will I grow for ever, 'till thou grant'st
This only Pray'r I make thee. —

B E L L M O U R.

Thou bidst me *fly*:
What would'st thou I should fly from?

L O U I S A.

Danger and Misery.

B E L L M O U R.

With whom then must I *leave* that Misery?
Must not thy self, and those Three friendless Wretches,
Whose Being I was Cause of, and who expect
Aid and Protection from a Parent's Hand;
While I escape, must you not all be left?
Hell glows in that hot Thought! be left, expos'd
To all the Miseries, which thou would'st have me
Fly, like a Coward, from, and leave for Innocents,

D 2

Who

Who owe 'em to my Baseness! No!— my *Louisa*,
Wretch, as I *have* been, I'm not fall'n *so* low!

LOUISA.

[*Rising.*] Lost, lost, for ever!

BELLMOUR.

No, there's a Judge on high,
Who sees, and loves, thy Goodness.— Let me entreat
thee,

To give my Sorrows way, for a few Moments.

A solitary Thought! a Turn or two,

Uninterrupted in the Gallery,

Will teach me to resolve, and then I'll call thee.

[*Exit Bellmour.*]

LOUISA.

Angels assist and guide thy silent Reasonings,
And, from this Labyrinth of Woes, unwind thee!

Dismal our Prospect! yet all *may* be well!

Heav'n cannot err—— oft guides us in the Dark——

And, when we least expect, affords Relief.

As thro' black Storms of Wind, and driving Rain,
Short sunny Beamings streak the harra's'd Main;
So, thro' deep Sorrows, Gleams of Comfort rise,
And spread smooth Heavens before the Sufferers Eyes.

[*Exit Louisa.*]

SCENE changes to a Gallery.

Enter BELLMOUR, alone, pensive.

BELLMOUR.

Why shou'd I pause! Nothing can be a Crime
Which puts a Stop to Evil. A thousand Men

May

The Fatal Extravagance.

21

May have been poor as I,—— and yet liv'd happy!
Miseries, we make *our selves*, are borne with Ease;
But he, who beggars his Posterity,
Begets a Race, to curse him—— Profuse in Ills,
He, propagating Ruin, with his Name,
Entails Descent of Anguish!—— Every Scorn,
Which wrings the Soul of any future *Bellmour*,
Whom Want shall pinch the Bones of, Ages hence,
Will *mark*, with Shame, my unforgotten Grave,
And reach my guilty Soul, where-e'er it wanders.
—— If to give Misery to those, to whom
We once gave Life, is an inhuman Crime,
How can it be a Sin, to take Life back,
And put an End to Misery? To live,
Is to be rack'd, if Life must still be poor:
For Poverty gives up the wise Man's Worth,
To the Contempt of tasteless Ignorance.
Oh!—— Cou'd I feel no Misery, but my own!
How easy were it for this Sword, to free me,
From all that Anguish, which embitters Life?
But, when the Grave has given *my* Sorrows Rest,
Where shall my miserable *Wife* find Comfort?
Unfriended, and alone, in Want's bleak Storm,
Not all the Angelic Virtues of her Mind
Will shield her, from the un pitying World's Derision.
Can it be kind to leave her so expos'd,
And, while I sleep in Death, not dream of *Her*?
Better a thousand times, to lead her *with* me,
Thro' the dark Doubtfulness of deep *Futurity*!
Whate'er uncertain Fate attends, hereafter,
It can but be the worst of what is bad,
And that's our State, already.—— It shall be done!
But how? That asks some Thought— Death, in itself,
Comes soft, and sweetly, as an Infant's Sleep,

When

When Nature, unalarm'd, expects it not.
 From those dear, destin'd Breasts, the pointed Steel
 Must draw no Blood, to stain my blushing Hand;
 Lest my Soul start, and that seem Cruelty,
 Which I wou'd fain think Pity.—— Hark! The
 Time presses me. [*Loud Knockings without.*]

What if I use th' unwounding Aid of Poison?
 I have at Hand that Sovereign Remedy,
 For all Diseases, Want and Woe can plague with.
 Mix'd with some unfear'd Draught 'twill gently murder:
 Bear off Death's painful Edge, and, in sweet Slumber,
 Swim soft, and shadowy, o'er the misty Eye-ball.

Enter LOUISA.

LOUISA.

Will you forgive me, if officious Love,
 That anxious Pain I feel, till *you* are safe,
 Obtrudes my Zeal, perhaps a few short Moments,
 Before you wou'd have wish'd to be disturb'd?
 Yon Villains grow impatient for Admission,
 And scarce your Servants guard the Gates against them.
 Storms of bold Oaths, and horrible Reproaches,
 Mix'd with loud Thunderings, and the Threats of Law,
 Make my Heart tremble, and have forc'd me hither,
 Forc'd me to urge you, by all Ties of Love,
 Of Interest, Honour, Hope, and future Happiness,
 To fly this dangerous Roof, and save us All.

BELLMOUR.

I thank thy gentle Care—— It is resolv'd.
 I have bethought me of a Means, to evade
 The Malice of my Fortune—— 'Twill be a Journey,
 A little longer, than thy Love could wish it;
 Yet not so far, but we shall meet again.

LOUISA.

The Fatal Extravagance.

23

L O U I S A.

Oh! be the Distance wide, as Pole from Pole,
Let me but follow Thee, and I am blest'd.

B E L L M O U R.

It shall be so, *Louisa*.

L O U I S A.

A thousand Angels
Spread their Wings o'er thee, and protect thy Steps.
Now thou art kind!—— But the dear *little ones*,
Shall *They* go too?

B E L L M O U R.

All! all! shall go!

L O U I S A.

Haste then,
Let us be gone—— my bounding Heart leaps joyful,
And I shall smile again—— But ah me, *Bellmour*!
They are so young! so tender! is it possible,
That they should travel with us?

B E L L M O U R.

Moving Innocence!
My strong Heart bleeds within me, at her Accents!

[*Aside.*

A few short Steps will lodge us in a Place [To her.
Of Rest and Safety—— we shall have Leisure there,
To weigh our future Hopes, and seek fit Means,
To our wish'd End.—— *Courtney* will soon return;
Said he not so?

L O U I S A.

He did, and we'll inform him
Of our new Purpose, and begin our Flight.

I']

24 *The Fatal Extravagance.*

I'll make Provision, such as best befits
Our Haste, and our Distresses.

[*She is going.*]

B E L L M O U R.

Stay, *Louisa!*
Those boasted Cordials, the *French* Marquis sent me,
Gave I to Thee, or no?

L O U I S A.

You spoke of such——
But still forgot to give 'em me—— and now,
They're not worth Memory——

B E L L M O U R.

Nay, now, most useful!
Their Virtue is reported Sovereign,
Against the Body's Toil, or Mind's Disturbance.

L O U I S A.

Wou'd *Courtney* were come. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter COURTNEY, *alone.*

C O U R T N E Y.

Strange! that a Man should linger thus in Peril!
The pointed Sword, that, by a slender Hair,
Hung o'er the Head of *Damocles*, was *Shadow*
To *Bellmour's* solid Danger.——I was told
He walks this way——I'll trace the Gallery round,
And urge him to escape—— Few Minutes more
May spread a Crowd of Eyes on every Side,
And fatally prevent him.

[*Exit.*]

Re-enter

Re-enter BELLMOUR.

B E L L M O U R.

My baleful Hand has mix'd the deadly Draught,
To give it as a Cordial—— Give it! *whom?*
Start from thy burning Orb, thou conscious Sun,
And chill thy self to Frost at my black Purpose.
Am I a Parent? a Protector? Lover?
Or has this Devil, that heaves about my Heart,
Transform'd me to a Fiend? He *has!* he *has!*
Chain him, some Angel, millions of Fathoms down;
Heap him with Mountains, lest he rise again,
And in a Husband's and a Father's Breast,
Brew horrid Murders!— I am my self, once more—
Now let cool Reason's undistracted Search
Answer my bleeding Soul, *which* dreadful Ill
May best be born by Nature — To leave our Friends,
To grinding Sorrow, Poverty and Scorn,
With Sense of his not feeling *any* Pain,
Who gave them all; —— or, to quit Life together,
And, wanting Pow'r to *bless*, make it *some* Merit,
Not to leave *Curses* to surviving Innocence!
I'm mad again —— Reason her self betrays me,
And whispers, that this *last* is *Cruelty*,
And Murder grows a Mercy——

Enter LOUISA.

L O U I S A.

Found you the Cordial?
Your little Wanderers are ready dress'd
To act the Pilgrim with us; perhaps 'twill aid
Their fainting Spirits, yet untried in Hardships.

E

B E L L

26 *The Fatal Extravagance.*

B E L L M O U R.

I cannot move— my Feet, bound down by Nature,
Rebel against my Heart. ——— Oh! If one Moment,
One short *Thought* longer, She oppresses me, thus,
With melting, innocent, *Talk*—— I shall grow soft,
Yield her to *Want*, and live to be a *Beggar*.

L O U I S A.

Still you are doubtful——

B E L L M O U R.

No—— no—— I'm fix'd—— Oh! Nature! [*Aside.*
I left my Closet open,—— on a Table,
In that Gold Cup, which was thy Father's Present,
When thy first Favourite Boy's last Birth-day came,
Thou'lt find the fittest Cordial—— I try'd 'em all,
And what seem'd properest, for the Boys and Thee,
Waits, in that Cup, thy tasting.——

L O U I S A.

Courtney stays long.——

All Things are ready, and I wish him here.
Now for this boasted Cordial——

[*Exit.*

B E L L M O U R.

Be firm, my Heart!
Stop thy big Beat! Thaw, thaw, this curdling Blood,
That, thro' my icy Veins, creeps, cold as Death,
And freezes in its Passage.—— Where is *Louisa*?
But a few Moments, and she is no more!
Now! now! the unsuspecting Innocent
Lifts that last Cup— Now, now, she tastes a Draught,
'That snatches her, for ever, from my Sight,
And robs me of her Comfort! Never more,
Shall her sweet Voice *enchant* me! Never more,
Shall

Shall her soft *Eyes* look fondly into mine,
And *shine* with swimming Languor—— Never, never,
Will her unwearied Wit beguile my Cares,
Or hush me *more* to Peace, when Passion shakes me!
Open, engulf me, and conceal my Shame,
Befriending Earth!——Or, from thy yawning Depth,
Stream up a Night of Gloom, to blot out Memory,
And darken o'er Reflection!—— I feel my Blood
Cool, and grow *thick*, as melted Lead flows heavy,
And hardens, in its Motion—— A little longer,
And I, who have a *Heart*, already Marble,
Shall petrify *throughout*, and be a *Statue*!

LOUISA [*Within.*]

My Life! my *Bellmour*!

BELLMOUR.

Ha! 'tis her Voice that calls me——
It founded not reproachful.

LOUISA [*Within.*]

Look, look, my *Bellmour*!
These little Strugglers will not quit the Cordial,
But sip it to the Bottom.——

BELLMOUR.

Torturing Horror!——

Enter LOUISA, with an empty Cup.

LOUISA.

How cou'd you be so rigid, not to come,
When I twice call'd you? 'Twould have been a Scene
Of Pleasure, to observe with how much Eagerness,
The little Wranglers quarrell'd for the Cup,
Which, having drank, my self, I brought to *Them*.

E 3

I bid

I bid 'em *Taste* it only—— and told the Praters;
It was their Father's Present: But that Word
Transported them, to lift their pretty Hands,
And brought a *War* about me——

B E L L M O U R.

Furies tear me!——

L O U I S A.

Did you not give Permission they should taste it?
E're they began the Journey!

B E L L M O U R.

Alas! *Louisa*!

A long, long, Journey is, indeed! begun,
But endless, as Eternity—— Thy self,
And those dear Infants,—— are *poyson'd* by that Cor-
dial.

L O U I S A.

Poison'd! by *Thee*? Thou say'st it but to try me!
If 'twere thy Wish that I should die, thy *Love*,——
At least, thy *Pity*, wou'd have given some *Warning*.
Death is a dreadful Journey, and requires
Much length of Preparation. ——

B E L L M O U R.

By those Charms,
Which I no more must gaze on, and be blest'd,
Thou can'st not live an Hour——A last, long Sleep
Will steal, in cold Advances, o'er thy Beauties,
And those two beamy Suns, which sparkle on me,
Anon, shall set in Death——Even, while we talk,
The eternal Shade will rise, at once, between us,
And sever us for ever.

L O U I S A.

The Fatal Extravagance.

29

L O U I S A.

Dreadful Contraction!

Of that short Span, which at its longest stretch,
Was much too narrow, to allow me Scope,
To *spe*ak, or *loo*k, or *thi*nk, my Love, for Thee:
What shall I say?—— A thousand tender Thoughts
Struggle, at once, for Vent.—— I cannot speak——
Death is too hasty—— I have yet, *undone*,
Unspoke, *unthought*, a thousand weighty Things!
O! Heaven! my *Little ones*!—— Let me fly to them!
Have I so short a Time, to gaze upon them?
Yet ne'er must see 'em more!—— I cannot leave Thee.
What shall I do?—— O bring my Children hither;
Fly with 'em to my Arms!—— Dear, dying, Innocents!
Oh! *Bellmour*! *Bellmour*! Why has this been done?

B E L L M O U R.

That we might baffle Woe, and die together——
And leave no Beggars of our Race behind us.
See! my *Louisa*! I have a faithful Guide,

[*Drawing a Dagger.*

That will not let me lose thee—— [Stabs himself.

L O U I S A.

Oh! cruel *Bellmour*!

What hast thou done?—— Now, I am kill'd indeed!
Help, help!—— O! Uncle! what a dreadful Scene
Are you return'd to?

Enter COURTNEY.

C O U R T N E Y.

I have heard it all——

And had not that conceal'd, undreamt of, Dagger,
Prevented

Prevented my near Vigilance, had sav'd
Unhappy *Bellmour*. ———

B E L L M O U R.

Not unhappy, now ———
We slide, united, from the Woes of Life,
And Want's too slow to reach us. ———

C O U R T N E Y.

Mistaken Man!
The Hand of Heaven, how'er, from mortal Eyes,
Obscur'd in Clouds, still points direct at Justice!
Not thy three Children, nor thy guiltless Wife,
But Thou, alone, art fallen! whose single Crime
Drew down a single Vengeance!

L O U I S A.

Alas! what mean you? ———

B E L L M O U R.

Thou little know'st the deadly Means I us'd,
If thou conceiv'st me frustrated ———

C O U R T N E Y.

Hear, then, with Wonder ———
And, trembling, mark the mazy Paths of Providence.
Seeking you on the Gallery's Garden Side,
I, in your Closet, spy'd a late fill'd Cup,
With a small Phial near it. ——— To the Neck
There hung a Label. — By the Name, inscrib'd,
I saw, with sad surprize, it had held Poison.
Concluding, you had newly mingled it,
With that rich Draught it stood by ——— From a
Window,
I threw it on the Garden ——— refill'd the Cup,
Without its deadly Mixture ——— and stood, conceal'd,
To

The Fatal Extravagance.

31

To watch what happen'd — when *Louisa* came,
And snatch'd it thence, I follow'd her, unmark'd,
Pleas'd to have been a Means, to intercept
Hers, and her Childrens Death. -- The Rest, you know
too well.

B E L L M O U R.

Angels Surround thee, with unceasing Vigilance,
And, for this Friendship, ward off every Evil.
Oh! I have err'd! —

L O U I S A.

Oh! too, too, partial Blessing!
Faint Sweet! with more than poysonous Bitter mix'd!
Now *Bellmour*! tell me — was it not a Crime,
To distrust Heav'n? Else thou hadst liv'd — and then,
We had all, perhaps, been blest.

C O U R T N E Y.

You had, indeed!
By a young Kinsman, landed, from a Ship,
That left her Consort scarce a Day behind,
Woodly has heard surprizing News — your Brother,
Absent, so many Years, and long thought dead,
Returning, Rich, from the remotest East,
Dy'd but in sight of Land, and has bequeath'd
His whole, heap'd, Wealth, to *Bellmour*.

B E L L M O U R.

Heaven! I Adore thee!
Would I had trusted thy Eternal Wisdom!
Thou best canst clear thy Mystic Dispensations,
And make Confusion end in beauteous Order.
Oh thou art Just! and dreadful is thy Conduct;
Punish'd, with this Severity of *Justice*,

I feel,

I feel, and own, thy *Mercy* — Now live, *Louisa*!
Live, and be happy — and forget — thy *Bellmour*.

[*Dies.*

LOUISA.

Oh!

[*She swoons.*

COURTNEY.

Alas! she faints — This sudden Turn of Terror,
Rushes too strong, to be withstood by Nature.
I'll call her Women, to her Aid, and watch her,
'Till Time and Thought, by slow Degrees, bring Com-
fort.

From this sad Story let Observers know,
That early Riot ends in lasting Woe.
Mean, and Ignoble, Pleasures break the Mind,
Un-nerve our Judgement, and our Reason blind,
'Till Heav'n o'er-takes Us, with some dreadful Fate,
And the touch'd Soul grows sensible, too late.

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F I N I S.



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